

VZCZCXRO4485
OO RUEHROV
DE RUEHTV #3172 3041658
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 311658Z OCT 07
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3971
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 003172

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/31/2017

TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PTER](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: IDF RATCHETS UP PRESSURE ON HAMAS IN THE GAZA STRIP

REF: A. TEL AVIV 2742

[1](#)B. TEL AVIV 2707

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones. Reasons: 1.4 (b)(d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) Late October 30, the Israeli Air Force (IAF) bombed a Hamas police position in the southern Gaza Strip, killing four Hamas policemen and wounding five, according to media reports. An Israel Defense Forces (IDF) spokesman confirmed the strike, noting that it was in response to the firing of mortar rounds at Netiv Ha'asara Moshav near the border of the Gaza Strip -- which damaged a home but resulted in no casualties -- and continued launching of Qassam rockets into Israel. The spokesman added, "The Israeli army will continue to act against these terrorists to reduce the number of rockets fired at southern Israel." Netiv Ha'asara has reportedly experienced a surge in mortar attacks over the past several weeks. Palestinian Islamic Jihad reportedly claimed responsibility for the mortar attack.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Also on October 30, Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said during a tour of northern Israel that a large-scale IDF operation against Palestinian rocket squads is drawing near. He told Army Radio, "Every day that passes brings us closer to a broad operation in Gaza. We are not happy to do it. We are not rushing to do it. And we will be happy if circumstances succeed in preventing it. But the time is approaching when we will have to undertake a broad operation in Gaza."

[1](#)3. (C) COMMENT: Israel's security establishment is ratcheting up the pressure on Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Yesterday night's airstrike with a precision guided munition on the Hamas police station was the first such attack against a Hamas installation in recent months. Last week, Israel's security establishment decided to initiate a number of sanctions against the Gaza Strip in accordance with the GOI's September 19 declaration of the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip as a "hostile entity." Fuel supplies to the Gaza Strip have already been cut in response to continued Qassam rocket and mortar launches. Israeli Attorney-General Menahem Mazuz on October 29 held up proposed cuts of electricity to the Gaza Strip, contending that more research into the legal justification for such cuts needs to be done before they can be carried out. The GOI's warnings over the past several weeks about such punitive actions -- in combination with Barak's repeated warnings of a future large-scale ground operation -- appear aimed at encouraging Gaza's population to pressure Hamas and other terrorist organizations to stop Qassam rocket and mortar launches against civilian population centers in Israel.

Visit Embassy Tel Aviv's Classified Website:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/telaviv>

You can also access this site through the State Department's
Classified SIPRNET website.

JONES